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FOURTEENTH YEAR. WA-KEENEY, KANSAS, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1892. NUMBER 39.

THE HOUSE BY THE WOOD.

The pines and the sycamores over it toss,
Its shingles are thick with a coating of moss,
Its quaint yellow chimneys, long smokeless and cold,
Are papered with lichens of yellow and gold.
With a thicket of roses the gateway is barred,
And burdock and thistle grow up in the yard,
Where the tall lady-lillies in beauty once stood,
Round the tenantless home at the edge of the wood.

But on midsummer night through the dust-covered panes,
All curtained with cobwebs and spotted by rains,
A maid in blue satin looks out at the moon,
And listens, but not to the cricket's shrill tune.
Far away on the road by the river she hears
The clatter of hoofs, and it rapidly nears.
Who cometh so late over hilltop and flood
To the lonely old house at the edge of the wood?

He casteth no shadow behind or before
As he raps with the hilt of his sword on the door;
When out of the portal he issues again
His cloak is in tatters, his sword is in twain,
But he beareth the beautiful maid in his arms,
With nothing to cover her bosom's bare charms;
And he leaveth his footprints behind him in blood
Ere he rideth away from the house by the wood.

It is silent again, and a silence so deep
You can hear through the grass the black beetles creep.
There's a horrible stain on the floor of the hall,
And a grave at the foot of the cedar tree tall.
It is shunned by the schoolboys who wander this way,
No woman will pass it, no tenant will stay
Since the gray-bearded master was found in his blood
In the rat-ridden house at the edge of the wood.
—Waverly Magazine.

EARNING HIS SALT.

"You don't earn your salt, that's what you don't! You're jest a trouble an' expense."

Miss Hannah Smith shut the milk-room door with a slam, and Sammy, her orphan nephew, took up the pail of milk and went to feed the calf. He went down through the garden very slowly, and the pail seemed very heavy, judging from the dejected way in which he carried it, or, perhaps, it was his heart which was so heavy, after all.

He did seem to be so unfortunate; he had just broken the blue-and-white bowl from which his supper of bread and milk had just been eaten. Of course, he had not meant to break it and was truly sorry, but it had vexed his aunt all the same, and brought down upon him sharp words of condemnation which he had so often heard.

"You don't earn your salt!"

And he had worked so hard that day, it was hot and sultry after a rainy morning, and he had churned, and weeded the garden beds—such long beds they were, too—and raked the dooryard, and hunted out a stolen hen's nest, and picked some currants, and fed the chickens over and over again, and the calf and the pig—why, it made him tired just to think over all he had done! And it was Saturday, too—a holiday for most boys; but for poor Sammy there had been no time to play or even to go fishing up the creek with "the boys," or even to look between the covers of a story-book which one of them had lent him; and so the day had gone, and after all, he had not earned his salt.

He had reached the bars of Spot's pasture, and the pretty creature had just put her eager nose in the pail, when one of the Lawrence boys came skipping along the lane.

"Hey, Bert! Come over and see Spot drink."

"All right! can't stop but a minute, though, for I've got an errand for Miss Smith; but, my gracious! ain't Spot growing into a beauty?"

"Yes, that she is; she's the biggest eater you ever seen! But say, Bert, is salt very dear stuff?"

"Salt? why, I don't know; I guess not, though, for everybody has lots of it. Why, Sam, you don't feed much of it to Spot yet, do you?"

"Oh, no. I was jest wonderin' about it, that all,"

"Well, ask your Aunt Hanner; she'll be sure to know—but, my sake! I mustn't stand here, for the baby's sick an' ma wants help."

Bert sped to the house, and Sam lingered so long over the bars that his aunt had some excuse for the sharpness with which she called:

"Sammy! Sam, Sammee! where be you a-stayin' to?"

And as soon as he made his appearance she said:

"I want to know if you've come at last! I didn't know but you'd fell in the pail of milk an' drowned yourself. Here, I've got to go straight over to Mis Laurence's 'cause her baby's sick and she's scairt nigh to death, as she always is if the least thing's the matter, an' I want to lock up the house an' take the key, so you'll have to come in an' go to bed."

Poor Sam! It was only a little after sunset, and it was getting so pleasant and cool out of doors, and he knew just how hot and stuffy it was in his little room under the eaves.

"Oh, Aunt Hanner! please, mayn't I go with you?"

"You? why, what airthly use do you think you'd be to the baby?"

"None, of course; but—but you'll be so awful lonesome a comin' back all alone!"

"Stuff an' nonsense! I don't mean to stay over an hour; an' I don't like to leave the house all stark alone with all that money in it neither; not that there's any real danger, for there ain't no prowlers around nowadays, an' if there was they'd never think of lookin' where I keep my money hid. I was a fool for tellin' you, I s'pose."

"Why, Aunt Hanner! you know I'd never touch it!"

"Of course you wouldn't; you're honest, or you wouldn't be Benjamin's boy. But, as I was sayin', I ought to have gone in to the bank this forenoon, but it was so hot an' I had so much to do. I must go sure on Monday; an' you be a good boy an' go straight to bed, an' mebbe I'll let you go along. I've got to buy you another pair of shoes, I s'pose. How glad I shall be if you ever do git big enough an' capable enough to earn your salt!"

Sam hung up his hat in the entry and went into the kitchen, where his aunt was busy putting things in order for the night and fastening down the windows, but suddenly she said:

"I do s'pose it ain't cooled off a mite up in your room yet, Sammy, so if you want to you can set here by this window, a spell, if you'll promise not to go out of it, an' be sartin' sure to put it down an' turn the catch down over the top before you go to bed."

Sam gracefully promised, and his aunt, knowing she could trust him, locked the door, put the key in her pocket, and departed, for, in spite of her stern and abrupt manners, she had the experience and ready tact which made her a blessing to her suffering neighbors.

The lonely boy watched her out of sight up the lane, and thought wistfully how the Lawrence boys would be out playing "wolf" and "hop-scotch" all through the long twilight, and wished that he might be with them; but then with a little thrill of pleasure he thought of the promised new shoes, and there was the story-book—surely he might read a few minutes, so he ran upstairs after it, and settled himself close by the window to catch the last remnant of daylight; but he had read scarcely more than two pages when the window was suddenly darkened by the figure of a man.

Sam was startled, and still more dismayed when he saw that, instead of one of the neighbors, it was a man he had never before seen.

"Well, young chap, improvin' your mind, be ye? That's a good idea; but couldn't you jest get me a drink of water or milk, or—or ask somebody else to do it?"

"There ain't nobody else; but I can get you some water. I don't hardly dare disturb the milk."

"Ah, I see, afraid! Old lady's a terror, is she? Locks you up alone in the house when she's away."

"Well, I was just going to bed, you know, an—"

"Mannerly folks don't go to bed when they've got callers," said the man, sitting down in the window. "Come, I'm dying for the water, boy!"

Sam hardly knew what to do. The water pail was out in the shed, and he could not shut the window down with the man sitting there; but while he hesitated the visitor swung himself in.

"Now, my young friend, never mind the water, but give me that money. I'll take care of it, an' save the old woman goin' to the bank."

The boy's knees shook under him at this demand, but he said, bravely:

"I ain't got no money to give you!"

"Likely not; but you know where her money is. I heard every word she said. Few words an' quick work is my motto, so you just git it, an' I'll be off, an' you can go to your peaceful rest. She keeps it in some out-of-the-way place, I know; a nice hidin'-spot—now, where is it?"

Poor little Sam! How he wished he could say truthfully he didn't know where. What should he do? He must keep the secret—that was certain! But what would this dreadful man do to him? Oh! if his aunt had only gone to the bank that day. She never kept much money in the house, but this was the price of a piece of land that one of the neighbors had bought of her.

"I can't tell you!" said the boy at last.

"Well, then, show me, that'll be all the better!"

"I can't do that, neither! Oh, do please go away!"

"I will soon as I git my hands on that money—double quick, too! An' now if you don't git it in a hurry, I'll take means to make you!" and taking Sam's arm in a grip that made him wince, he continued: "Now, lead off lively, an' no false scents, neither, you mind!"

But the child refused to take one step.

"You won't, hey? I don't want to shoot you, but—"

Poor Sam shuddered with terror, and gasped out:

"Oh, mister, don't! I can't get you the money, but I will get the milk right straight off!"

"Who cares for milk now? It's the greenbacks I want, d'ye hear? Now git 'em, or you'll suffer!"

"I can't! I can't, not if you do kill me! Oh! ain't you got no little boys at home that you wouldn't want hurt, so you can be sorry for me?"

"No, I ain't; boys ain't worth their salt, an' I ain't got no home neither!"

"Oh, dear! I wish Aunt Hanner would come home!" sobbed poor Sam in an agony of fear and dread.

"Well, she won't—not for a half hour yet. Now quit that snifflin', and show up that money!"

But Sam's lips were sealed, and his feet motionless.

"Here, then," said the tramp, "if you're bound to be dumb, I'll make you so in earnest," and in a moment the boy was firmly gagged.

"Will you get it now, before worse happens?"

But Sam, though faint with mortal terror, shook his head decidedly, and the man, becoming desperate, took some strong cord from his pocket and tied Sam's hands behind him and then to the handle of the door, and proceeded to rummage for himself, assuring the child that if he failed to find the money and he still refused to tell, he should certainly kill him.

Sammy's whole life of twelve years seemed to pass before him as he stood there in misery with the cord cutting into his flesh. Oh, how sweet life looked to him now—even the homely duties which that very day he had grumbled over. And dear Aunt Hannah! Would she know that he had died in defense of her beloved money? Would she be very sorry, he wondered, and would it be a dreadful expense to have a funeral and bury him? Ah! he had never been worth his salt, but had been a trouble always! He felt faint and dizzy, but these words seemed to ring in his ears, and he was startled by a slight noise. Could the ruffian be coming back so soon? and he had not found the money of course! But—no—the sound seemed to come from outside, and a key grated in the lock.

Hours after that Sammy came to himself in a strange room, and his aunt was on her knees by his bed, sobbing and kissing his poor, swollen wrists.

When he became strong enough he was told the balance of the story. How Mr. Lawrence had been a straggler in the vicinity that evening, and had heard rumors of late robberies, and Miss Smith, quite uneasy, had hurried home as soon as the baby was better; how Mr. Lawrence had gone with her, and they had surprised the burglar, and would have captured him but for the daring leap through a second-story window; and how Sam had been released and carried over to Mr. Lawrence's house, where he and his aunt and the money were to remain over Sunday at least. All this he was told, and also that he was one of the very best and bravest and dearest boys in all the world! And Sammy has heard no allusion to salt since that eventful night.

The System of the German Army.

It is impossible to conceive a more thorough system than that on which the German army is based. In every village there is a certain amount of money deposited in the town hall which is sufficient to keep all the soldiers in the village in food for thirty days after the declaration of war.

Next to the town hall are the armory, arsenal and barracks of the place. Here are the cannon and the smaller arms, the ammunition, and every requisite for war. The officers live in the building.

Scattered throughout the villages are the soldiers. Those who have passed the first term of service are engaged in various occupations. Every horse in the village is duly ticketed and appraised. At stated times the horse is taken from his position in the shafts of a carriage, or butcher's, baker's, or candlestick-maker's cart, mounted by a soldier, or hitched to a gun carriage, drilled into his business, and then returned to his owner. The instant war breaks out the horse becomes the property of William II.

This condition of things exists in every corner of the Empire. The instant the Emperor decides on war, the entire telegraphic and railway service is turned over to the State; the shoemaker in the village dons his uniform, jumps upon his neighbor's horse and reports himself at the barracks; the bag of money is put in the gun carriage; and within a few hours the entire force of the village, town or city, is standing in the road ready mounted and thoroughly equipped for active service. Everything is arranged, all contingincies are foreshadowed, and an army of three million men stands waiting for orders within a few hours after the declaration of war.

The German Press.

According to the foreign papers there are now 3,538 journals and magazines printed in Germany. In 1891 there were 3,443; in 1890, 3,204; in 1889, 2,982; and in 1888, 2,729. There has been an increase since last year, therefore, of 95, and since 1888 of 800. German editors are proud of these statistics, to judge from their comments. The list promises to be greatly increased within the next twelve months, as the conditions for founding papers are more favorable than ever before. The freedom enjoyed by the press in Germany is to-day greater than it was a few years ago. Strange to say, no one has aided more effectively in bringing about this state of affairs than Prince Bismarck himself, once the inveterate enemy of independent newspaper men. German editors are clever men and will not lose the vantage ground which they have already gained. They hope that the day will come when there will be no such thing as a "muzzled press" in the Fatherland. It is probable, too, that their hopes will be fulfilled.

Paper Bed Quilts.

"There is something that I first saw during my travels in Germany," said a gentleman who but recently returned. "I am referring to bed quilts made of paper. They are making great headway, and can be found with almost every family now. They are warm and a great deal cheaper than those that we use. It would not surprise me to hear of some one undertaking their manufacture in this country."

CONDUCT yourself in the presence of your friend in the most circumspect manner; it is probable that he will some day be the friend of your enemy.

HIS FATHER'S OLD FRIEND.

The Introduction That Brought a Thoughtless Youth to His Senses.

"The old gentleman played a queer trick on me the other night," he said, as he lit his cigar after dinner. "It was rather awkward for me at first, but I guess it was a good thing after all.

"You know I used to feel that I had done myself an injustice if I did not go to the theater about five or six nights a week. Maybe it wasn't always the theater, but if it wasn't that it was a stag party or a poker game. I needn't explain; you've been with me frequently.

"Well, you also know how I'm fixed in the line of business. I work for my father, and I have to be at the office at 8:30 in the morning—just as the rest of the family are sitting down to breakfast. In consequence I get my breakfast and leave the house before they are up. But I can't complain of that. I'm doing exactly what the man who had my place before me did, and between you and me I think I'm drawing more salary than he did.

"But that's neither here nor there. It's the evenings. I used to finish work about 6, get dinner down-town, and go to the theater or somewhere else. Been doing it for about six months, and I swear when I figure back about the only times that I have seen my mother and sister have been at Sunday dinners. Nothing unusual in that, of course; the same thing is true of hundreds of young men in Chicago.

"But they haven't fathers like mine. He came to me one afternoon last week and asked me if I had an engagement for that night.

"'Yes,' I said; 'I've promised to go to the theater with Will Brown.'

"'How about to-morrow night,' he asked.

"'Haven't figured ahead that far,' I replied.

"'Well, I'd like to have you go somewhere with me.'

"'All right,' I said; 'where'll I meet you?'

"You see, he leaves the office about an hour before I get through.

"He suggested the Tremont House at 7:30, and I was there, prepared for the theater and a quiet lecture on late hours. He had combined the two on several previous occasions. But when he appeared he said he wanted me to call on a lady with him.

"'One I knew quite well when I was a young man,' he explained.

"We went out and started straight for home.

"'She is stopping at the house,' he said, when I spoke of it.

"I thought it strange that he should have made the appointment for the Tremont House under those circumstances, but I said nothing.

"Well, we went in and I was introduced with all due formality to my mother and my sister.

"The situation struck me as ludicrous and I started to laugh, but the laugh died away. None of the three even smiled. My mother and my sister shook hands with me and my mother said she remembered me as a boy, but hadn't seen much of me lately. Then she invited me to be seated.

"My, it wasn't a bit funny then, although I can laugh over it now. I sat down and she told one or two anecdotes of my boyhood, at which we all laughed a little. Then we four played whist for a while. When I finally retired I was courteously invited to call again. I went up-stairs feeling pretty small and doing a good deal of thinking."

"And then?" asked his companion.

"Then I made up my mind that my mother was a most entertaining lady and my sister a good and brilliant girl."

"And now?"

"Now I'm going to call again, as I have been doing quite regularly for the last week. I enjoy their company and propose to cultivate their acquaintance."

And the young man—he was only about 22—put on his coat and started for his car.—Chicago Tribune.

FIGS AND THISTLES.

TO-MORROW is the fool's good time.

WHERE there is love there is trust.

WELL-FED sheep are not apt to go astray.

A KING'S word is as strong as his army.

THE man who has no Bible has no God.

IT is hard to kill a sin that appears to pay well.

REFUSING to do right is rebellion against Christ.

A GOOD opportunity is seldom met in a beaten track.

A CHILD old enough to sin is not too young to repent.

A BAD day does not always begin with a dark morning.

A DOUBTER is always a dodger and a hider from the truth.

MANY very good-looking people are deformed on the inside.

THE darker it is all around us the more our light is needed.

A LOAFER in the church is as worthless as he is anywhere else.

THE soul that is not happy in God has already begun to doubt.

SWEETENED poision will kill as quick as that which is bitter.

IF we keep praise alive there will be no lack of joy in the heart.

LOVE for man is the highest possible evidence that we love God.

MORE good advice would be taken if it were given in a good way.

IF some parents would laugh more their children would weep less.

THERE are no degrees in sin. Any kind of a sinner is a lost sinner.

WHEREVER the gospel is preached there is sure to be gospel results.

THAT man helps the thief who does not put his money in a safe bank.

OUR needs are stairs that God sets up for us to climb toward Heaven.

THE sin that will keep you out of the Bible will keep you out of Heaven.

WHO knows but God uses our needs to show angels how great His power is.

MANY a boy has been ruined by being patted on the head—at the wrong time.

IT doesn't help us to grow in grace to sit down and pick other people to pieces.

MEN of the world measure themselves by sinners. Men of God by Christ.

THERE is no peace to be compared to that of the man who knows he is right with God.

IF you have a little faith it is God's way of telling you that you may have a great deal more.

IF God's light is shining in you it will be sure to be seen by somebody who is in the dark.

WHENEVER God sees a Christian who is willing to work, He gives him steady employment.

FIND a man who doubts and you find one who is weak. Without faith there is no strength.

THE only lean folks you can find in this world are those who try to keep all they can get.

THE devil knows that the only way he can starve a Christian is to first get him to doubt God.

TWO PEOPLE praying the same prayer from the heart always raise a commotion in Heaven.

GOD can not keep away from any place where two or three hearts are hungering for His presence.

A Cat's Fishing Expeditions.

In Woodlawn there is a cat that almost any afternoon can be seen leisurely wending his way over to the basin. In about half an hour he returns, invariably bringing with him a fresh fish for his supper. How he succeeds in catching the fish is a mystery not yet solved, but he evidently goes in swimming, for he is dripping wet when he reaches home.—Hyde Park News.